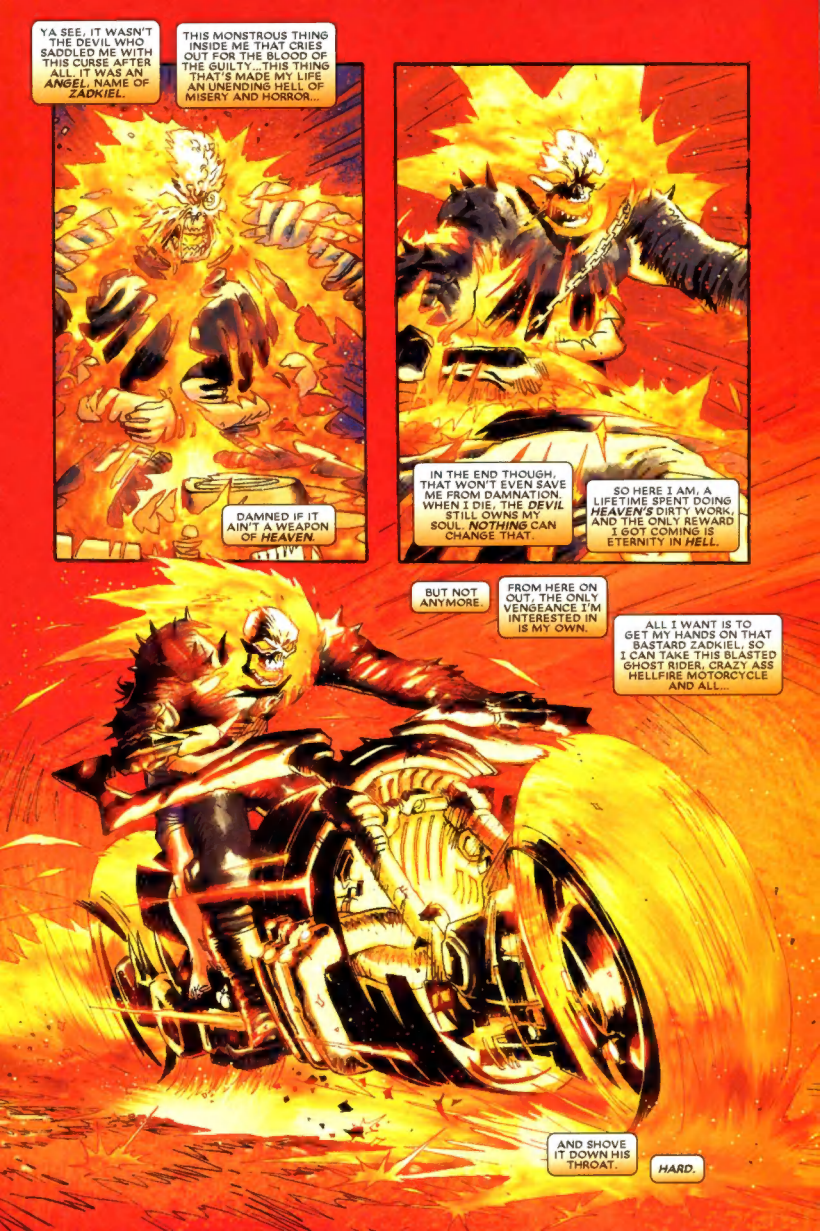
MY NAME'S JOHNNY BLAZE, AND I'M BOUND FOR HELL.
BUT FIRST I GOT SOME BUSINESS TO TEND TO IN HEAVEN.
ONCE UPON A TIME, I MADE A DEAL WITH THE DEVIL, AND MUCH TO THE SURPRISE OF NO ONE BUT ME, THINGS DIDN'T WORK OUT QUITE LIKE I HAD HOPED.
ALL I GOT IN EXCHANGE FOR MY SOUL WAS A LIFETIME BONDED TO A DEMONIC SPIRIT OF VENGEANCE CALLED THE GHOST RIDER.
I'VE SPENT MOST OF MY DAYS SINCE THEN FIGHTING DEMONS AND DEVILS OF EVERY SORT, LOOKING TO DO WHATEVER I COULD TO GET BACK AT THEM THAT SCREWED ME OVER.
LOOKING BACK NOW, I'M SURE THEY ALL HAD QUITE THE LITTLE LAUGH AT MY EXPENSE.


YA SEE, IT WASN'T THE DEVIL WHO SADDLED ME WITH THIS CURSE AFTER ALL. IT WAS AN *ANGEL*, NAME OF *ZADKIEL*.
THIS MONSTROUS THING INSIDE ME THAT CRIES OUT FOR THE BLOOD OF THE GUILTY...THIS THING THAT'S MADE MY LIFE AN UNENDING HELL OF MISERY AND HORROR...
DAMNED IF IT AIN'T A WEAPON OF *HEAVEN*.
IN THE END THOUGH, THAT WON'T EVEN SAVE ME FROM DAMNATION. WHEN I DIE, THE *DEVIL* STILL OWNS MY SOUL. *NOTHING* CAN CHANGE THAT.
SO HERE I AM, A LIFETIME SPENT DOING *HEAVEN'S* DIRTY WORK, AND THE ONLY REWARD I GOT COMING IS ETERNITY IN *HELL*.
BUT NOT ANYMORE.
FROM HERE ON OUT, THE ONLY VENGEANCE I'M INTERESTED IN IS MY OWN.
ALL I WANT IS TO GET MY HANDS ON THAT BASTARD ZADKIEL, SO I CAN TAKE THIS BLASTED GHOST RIDER, CRAZY ASS HELLFIRE MOTORCYCLE AND ALL...
AND SHOVE IT DOWN HIS THROAT.
HARD.

ANYBODY DON'T WANNA GET BURNED IN THE PROCESS...
BETTER STAY THE HELL OUTTA MY WAY.
GRAAAGH!
GRACIOUS, SON, THIS IS SOME *TENDER* MEAT YOU GOT HERE. WHAT KINDA *HAND CREAM* YOU USE?
OH SH--

HELL-BENT & HEAVEN BOUND PART FOUR

JASON AARON WRITER
ROLAND BOSCHI ARTIST
DAN BROWN COLOR ART
VC'S JOE CARAMAGNA LETTERER
MARKO DJURDJEVIC COVER ARTIST
AUBREY SITTERSON EDITOR
AXEL ALONSO EXEC. EDITOR
JOE QUESADA EDITOR IN CHIEF
DAN BUCKLEY PUBLISHER

OH...
MY...
CRASH!
JACK RABBIT
SCRUNCH!
...GOD?

LUCAS... DON'T YOU DIE ON ME, BOY.
THIS KID, LUCAS, HE'S GONNA HELP ME GET MY REVENGE. HE'S GONNA GIVE UP ALL OF ZADKIEL'S SECRETS.
LUCAS?
IF I CAN JUST KEEP HIS ASS ALIVE LONG ENOUGH.
DAMN.
I SWEAR, IF THAT BOY'S DEAD...
SKKREEEEEEEE
THERE'S SOME NURSES IN THIS TOWN THAT'LL SUFFER FOR SURE.
WHAT JUST... WHAT JUST HAPPENED?
LUCAS?
OH GOD, YOU'RE ONE OF THEM! THE NURSES!
NO, LUCAS, I QUIT THAT HORRIBLE PLACE, I PROM--
NO! YOU'RE NOT TAKING ME BACK!

"OR LACK THEREOF."
GGGRRRRRRR
COME ALONG THEN, YOU SONUVABITCH.
LET'S PUT THIS PUPPY TO BED.

CH-CHANGK!
CHUNGK!
GAA!
YOU!
I'VE HAD JUST ABOUT ENOUGH OUT OF YOU AND YOUR WHOLE BLAMED TOWN.
BITE ME.
PTEW
IIIIIIIIII
THIS PLACE PACKS WAY TOO MUCH CRAZINESS FOR A SIMPLE LITTLE TWO-BIT BACKWOODS BURG. IT'S NO COINCIDENCE I ENDED UP HERE, IS IT? THIS IS ALL ZADKIEL'S DOING.
SO TELL ME...WHAT OTHER LITTLE SURPRISES ARE WAITING FOR ME HERE?

WHUMP
UMM...
THIS ISN'T WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE.
UNLESS IT LOOKS LIKE I'M ABOUT TO DRAG THIS GUY HOME AND EAT HIM.
IN WHICH CASE, I GUESS IT'S EXACTLY WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE.

GUESS THIS MEANS YOU'RE FRESH OUTTA FRIENDS, HUH BLAZE?
ALL RIGHT, LADY, YOU'RE GONNA TELL ME EVERYTHING YOU KNOW ABOUT ZADKIEL. STARTING WITH WHERE I CAN FIND THE BASTARD.
HEH. I DON'T THINK SO.
I BELIEVE MY MASTER IS CALLING ME HOME.
NO...
NO NO NO...

RRRAAARRGGHHH!!!
ZADKIEL, YOU COWARD! COME DOWN HERE AND FACE ME ALREADY!
YOU HEAR ME, YOU BASTARD? C'MON!
SOON ENOUGH, JOHNNY. I PROMISE
I'VE WANTED TO HURT SO BAD IN MY LIFE!
I'M GONNA FIND SOMEONE WHO DESERVES TO SUFFER AND I'M GONNA BREAK THEM IN TWO! I'M GONNA PULL EYEBALLS OUT THROUGH THEIR NOSE AND TORCH THEIR SKULLS! I'M GONNA...
UMM...

CAN'T WAIT TO ■ RID OF THIS WHOLE BLASTED TOWN.
18
JUST ONE MORE SCENIC LITTLE DRIVE AND I'M *GONE*.
KRRRRRRRRR!
AS THE GHOSTS OF HIGHWAY 18 REND THE FLESH OF THE LAST LIVING DESCENDANT ■ THE MAN WHO LED THEM ALL TO THEIR DEATHS, I FEEL THEIR *CURSE* BEGIN TO WEAKEN.
SOON, THEIR SOULS WILL FINALLY ■ *FREE*.
WOULD THAT WE WERE ALL SO LUCKY.

SO HERE WE ARE, RIGHT BACK AT SQUARE ONE. NO CLOSER TO ZADKIEL THAN WHEN I STARTED.
NOTHING TO SHOW FOR MY TIME IN NEW BEULAH BUT SOME BRUISES AND BAD MEMORIES.
NEW BEULAH
DRIVE SAFELY
AND A WHOLE BUNCH OF *BODIES* IN MY WAKE.
AND SOMEHOW, I GET THE IDEA THAT'S JUST HOW ZADKIEL WANTED IT.
IN THE BACK OF MY BRAIN, I CAN'T HELP THINKING...
THAT I'VE BEEN PLAYED FOR A *SUCKER* ALL ALONG.
GAS

IS HE GONE?
BLAZE JUST RODE PAST ON HIS WAY OUT OF TOWN. YOU CAN RELAX.
SO HOW DID THINGS TURN OUT?
HOW DO YOU THINK? EVERYTHING WENT EXACTLY ACCORDING TO ZADKIEL'S PLAN.
EVERYTHING IS SET IN MOTION NOW. AND BLAZE IS NONE THE WISER.
YEAH, WELL WHAT DO I DO IF HE SUDDENLY GETS WISE?
WHO DO I CALL IF HE COMES BACK HERE?
IF HE COMES BACK HERE, IT WON'T MATTER WHO YOU CALL. YOU'LL BE DEAD BEFORE ANYONE GETS TO YOU. BLAZE WILL KILL YOU FOR SURE.
BUT IF IT MAKES YOU FEEL BETTER, YOU CAN CALL ME...

GHOST WRITERS

Welcome back, Flamehead fans. If you haven't yet read the last page of this issue, then you may want to STOP READING NOW and come back once you've read it. For the rest of you, I told you there was a big surprise coming, didn't I?

If you've read that last page and you don't know what the big deal is, then let me fill you in on a little GHOST RIDER history. Danny Ketch used to be the Ghost Rider. He first took the reins of the Spirit of Vengeance in 1990's GHOST RIDER #1 and headlined that series for 93 issues, taking the character to the greatest heights of popularity he's yet seen. Ever since Blaze reclaimed the mantle of the Ghost Rider a few years ago, we haven't seen hide nor hair of Ketch. Yet you fans have consistently clamored for his return. Well, now he's back. But just not in the way that you were probably expecting. So how did Ketch go from being a noble-minded everyman to a thrall of the evil Zadkiel? Just stay tuned, and you'll see. I promise it'll be a fun ride, complete with plenty more surprises. Now on to your letters.

To Marvel,

Since I began reading Ghost Rider in the 1990's I have loved his war with the devil, and his war within himself for being a Spirit of Vengeance. It seemed only logical that he would fight the devil.

Now with the revelation that Ghost Rider is actually an Angel of Vengeance it seems strange to me that Johnny Blaze would be so against this as to be hunting down Zadkiel. Wouldn't it be just what Johnny wanted? To finally be on the side of angels? I hope Ghost Rider isn't hunting down Zadkiel for too much longer, as I don't think I can keep my enthusiasm for this story.

That being written however, I cannot wait for Tan Eng Huat's rendition of Ghost Rider.

Kindest regards,

Maarten Bouw
Victoria, Australia

Hey, Maarten. Blaze doesn't really feel so much like he's "on the side of angels," as he is simply a pawn in heaven's game. He's been unwittingly doing Zadkiel's dirty work for years now, and being saddled with the Ghost Rider has cost Blaze everything that was ever precious to him in life. That's why he's hunting down Zadkiel. Blaze wants revenge for being taken advantage of. And yeah, Tan's doing some sizzling work on GHOST RIDER. Just wait until you see his rendition of some of the classic old GR villains. The Orb, anyone?

Dear Ghost Writers,

Check it out. Ghostie is back in action with kick ass story lines and hot art. But the one thing us fans truly want is to find out the whereabouts of Zarathos, Noble Kale and Danny Ketch. Also whatever happened to Caretaker and Johnny Blaze's kids? Hey, it's all good, keep up the good work! Hoo-ah.

Very Respectfully,

John J. Pellerito III
1LT, MP
SILVER SIEGE OFFICER
10th Mountain Div (LT)
UNITED STATES ARMY
ARNG/USAR
FORT DRUM, NY
"Strong, ARMY STRONG!"

Well, John, as you've seen this issue, Danny Ketch is already back. And in the next few months, we'll also see the return of one of those other characters you mention. Though I'm afraid you'll have to wait and see just who.

Dear Ghost Writers,

I just want to say how glad I am that Ghost Rider has been brought back to us, with the movie, which I enjoyed despite what a lot of people say about it, and the new series with Johnny Blaze, I can say that he is here to stay! I am pleased with this current run, I just grabbed issue #21 and all I can say is...WOW!!!!! Crazy nurses and man-eating ghosts, what's not to like about it?

It looks like things are gonna get more interesting for Johnny boy from here on out. I am very nervous with how things are gonna turn out for him. I really hope he has a happy ending, he has to have one, given all the "Hell" he's been through, but I guess it's not up to me.

Well keep up the good work! I have been very impressed with every issue so far, and I know you guys will not let us down!

In other news this Halloween marks the 15th anniversary of me discovering Ghost Rider! Yes, it was on Halloween night that I discovered ol' flame head at my local Wal-Mart. Can you picture a 9-year-old kid dressed in a jumpsuit and a glow-in-the-dark hockey mask, chowin' down on Halloween candy while readin' his first Ghost Rider comic ever? Ahhhh the memories.

Andrew
Lawrence, KS

Sounds like the perfect way to discover GR, Andrew. But don't get your hopes up about Blaze getting that happy ending. Or at least not any time soon.

Dear Ghost Writers,

I just finished reading issue #22, and I gotta tell ya...this is the most whacked-out, exciting, crazy, thrill-a-minute comic out there. Great stuff. I LOVE this book!

While I think of the Saltares/Texeira team as the definitive Ghost Rider artists, I really have no complaints with the new art team. I think it's important to appreciate just how tough Ghost Rider is to draw. All you have to do is look over the back issues of the various incarnations of this title. A lot of very talented artists drew a lot of really crappy-looking Ghost Riders. The Boschi/Brown combo is easily one of the best teams to tackle this difficult character. Setting a mood with their art seems to be a particular strength. The book has a wonderfully spooky feel to it.

The most shocking last page in Ghost Rider history is coming in #23, huh? I guess that's when you're going to reveal the dude on the phone is Dan Ketch? I'm either a genius or an idiot...guess I'll find out in 30. Now, if Blaze will just take that phone and shove it up Dan's... I digress. My GR soundtrack is below.

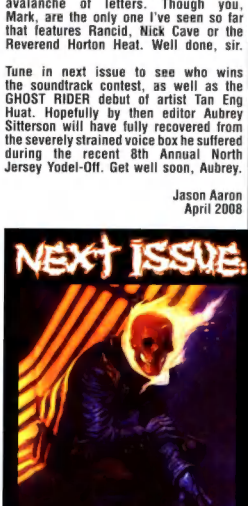
Sincerely,
Mark Robinson
Colorado Springs, CO

1) "Ghost Riders (in the Sky)" by the Outlaws
2) "Bad to the Bone" by George Thorogood
3) "The Devil's Chasing Me" by the Reverend Horton Heat
4) "I Want the Angel" by Jim Carroll
5) "Burning Man" by Queensryche
6) "Fu**ed By the Devil" by 45 Grave
7) "Injury" by Rancid
8) "Red Right Hand" by Nick Cave
9) "Blood & Fire" by Type O Negative
10) "Do What You Want" by Bad Religion

Wow, this GHOST RIDER soundtrack contest has really inspired a whole avalanche of letters. Though you, Mark, are the only one I've seen so far that features Rancid, Nick Cave or the Reverend Horton Heat. Well done, sir.

Tune in next issue to see who wins the soundtrack contest, as well as the GHOST RIDER debut of artist Tan Eng Huat. Hopefully by then editor Aubrey Sitterson will have fully recovered from the severely strained voice box he suffered during the recent 8th Annual North Jersey Yodel-Off. Get well soon, Aubrey.

Jason Aaron
April 2008



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